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Dear Mr. Genuis and Ms. Block,

Recently, you invited me to attend and co-host a talk and reception called *"Women's Rights, Democracy, and Freedom in the Middle East and in the West"* featuring Baroness Caroline Cox as a keynote speaker. This event was framed to me as one that would feature a speaker who is active in supporting women's rights, religious freedom and civil rights in the developing world – all of which are issues that I support and am passionate about.

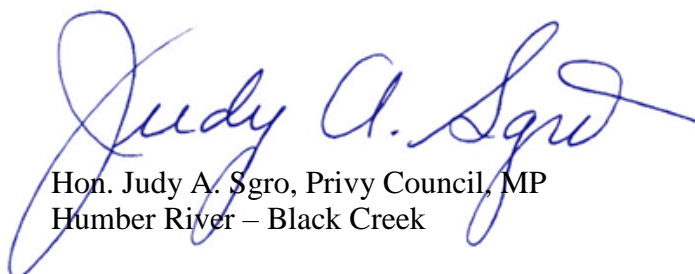
After further research into Baroness Cox's positions, I was extremely disappointed to find out that she has a lengthy history of spreading fear and division, while impairing the very democratic systems that she claims to advocate.

It has come to my attention that Ms. Cox is a supporter of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and that she has promoted anti-Islamic rhetoric that is harmful to democracies around the world.

Baroness Cox traveled to Syria on multiple occasions in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during the Syrian Civil War and the Siege of Aleppo. Most recently, in 2017 she met with Bouthaina Shaaban, a Senior Advisor to al-Assad who is named on American and European Union sanctions lists as complicit in Syrian government war crimes. Baroness Cox's continued lobbying in support of President Assad's government has acted as a distraction from the brutal slaughter and war crimes being committed against Syrians.

Furthermore, in 2010, Ms. Cox invited Dutch Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders to show the anti-Islam film, *Fitna*, before the House of Lords. The film calls for an end to immigration to Europe from Muslim countries. This type of hateful and divisive rhetoric has no place in Canada and certainly should not be promoted by Members of Parliament.

As mentioned by email to your staff Thursday, I must therefore withdraw my support for this event. Canadians must have trust that Parliamentarians are conducting themselves in a manner consistent with Canadian values that we hold dear, namely: diversity, inclusion and peace.



Hon. Judy A. Sgro, Privy Council, MP
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